

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 AF-08 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 TRSE-00 EB-07 ACDA-07 SAM-01 /092 W

----- 072192

R 012059Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7566

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR FR MO

SUBJ: HASSAN'S VISIT TO FRANCE: NOV 22-25

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: KING HASSAN'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO FRANCE WAS THE OCCASION FOR HEAVY MEDIA TREATMENT OF MOROCCO, THE KING AND FRANCO-MOROCCAN RELATIONS. THE KING HIMSELF PROVIDED MUCH OF THE COPY IN A SERIES OF PRESS INTERVIEWS WHICH HE HANDLED WITH GREAT SKILL. THE OVERALL EFFECT WAS TO CREATE A DECIDEDLY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION OF THE MONARCH AND HIS COUNTRY. THUS HASSAN'S FIRST TRIP ABROAD SINCE 1972 ACHIEVED IN LARGE MEASURE ITS BASICALLY POLITICAL PURPOSE OF DEMONSTRATING THAT HE HAS THE SITUATION WELL IN HAND AT HOME, THAT HE RETAINS THE SUPPORT OF THE WEST, THAT HIS TENTATIVE STEPS TOWARDS DEMOCRATIZATION HAVE FRENCH BLESSINGS AND THAT THE OLD FRANCO-MOROCCAN CONNECTION HAS EVOLVED INTO ONE OF RESPECT, ESTEEM AND COOPERATION BETWEEN EQUALS WHO SHARE COMMON INTERESTS. WHILE THE SAHARA REMAINED OFFICIALLY IN THE BACKGROUND,

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FRENCH MEDIA PLAYBACK OF ALGERIAN PRESS CRITICISM OF

THE VISIT UNDERLINED SUBTLELY THE RESPECTIVE POSITIONS OF HOST AND GUEST ON THE ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

1. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE VISIT INCLUDED THREE TETE-A-TETES WITH GISCARD (PLUS AN INTIMATE LUNCHEON NOV 28 DURING THE POST-OFFICIAL, "PRIVATE" PORTION OF THE VISIT); THE UNUSUAL HONOR OF LODGING THE SOVEREIGN AT THE TRIANON PALACE; THE TRADITIONAL GALA, HELD AT VERSAILLES; AN EXCHANGE OF DINNERS HONORING THE CHIEFS OF STATE; AND THE HALLOWED VISIT TO CITY HALL, MADE MEMORABLE BY THE PRESENCE OUTSIDE OF HUNDREDS OF MOROCCAN IMMIGRANT WORKERS CHEERING THEIR KING.

2. THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE, SHORT BY FRENCH STANDARDS OF RECENT YEARS BUT IN KEEPING WITH NEW GUIDELINES LAID DOWN BY FONMIN DE GUIRINGAUD, DESCRIBES THE VISIT AS A MANIFESTATION OF THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF FRANCO-MOROCCAN RELATIONS. "A CONVERGENCE OF VIEWS" ON NUMEROUS MATTERS, ESPECIALLY THE ATTACHMENT OF THE TWO CHIEFS OF STATE TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND RESPECT FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF STATES AND THEIR DESIRE TO PROMOTE AN EQUITABLE, JUST, NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER, IS NOTED. PARTICULAR ATTENTION WAS DEVOTED TO THE MEDITERRANEAN SITUATION AND THE TWO MEN "UNDERLINED THE NECESSITY FOR CONSTANT EFFORTS TO PROMOTE ENTENTE AND BALANCED COOPERATION AMONG PEOPLES ALONG ITS SHORES." (GISCARD MADE SOMEWHAT THE SAME POINT IN HIS NOV 23 SPEECH AT VERSAILLES, ADDING THAT THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES SHOULD "RESOLVE THEMSELVES, WITHOUT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE, THE PROBLEMS OF THEIR REGION.") A COMMON INTEREST IN THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE AND IN WESTERN EUROPEAN-ARAB COOPERATION IS NOTED.

3. ON BILATERAL AFFAIRS, THE COMMUNIQUE GIVES KUDOS TO HASSAN'S DIRECTION OF MOROCCO'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FRANCE'S CONTRIBUTION THERETO AND SAYS COOPERATION WILL BE BROADENED. GRATIFICATION OVER THE APPLICATION OF THE NEW INVESTMENT AND CULTURAL ACCORDS AND WITH THE PROGRESS IN MATTERS CONCERNING FRENCHMEN LIVING

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IN MOROCCO IS EXPRESSED. FINALLY, THE COMMUNIQUE INDICATES HASSAN'S "SATISFACTION" WITH FRENCH GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO ASSIST MOROCCAN WORKERS, NOTABLY FOR THE PRIORITY ACCORDED TO FAMILY,

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USIA-06 TRSE-00 EB-07 ACDA-07 SAM-01 /092 W

----- 071469

R 012059Z DEC 76

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EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND TRAINING PROBLEMS, AND TO
IMPROVED HOUSING.

4. AMONG THE MANY STATEMENTS HASSAN GAVE TO THE PRESS,
HIS REPLIES ON THE SAHARA ARE PERHAPS MOST INTERESTING.
(THE SUBJECT WAS NOT DIRECTLY MENTIONED IN OFFICIAL
SPEECHES AND THE COMMUNIQUE.) HE TOLD RADIO
EUROPE 1 ON NOV 21 THAT HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO MEET
BOUMEDIENNE "AS I HAVE NOTHING TO BLUSH ABOUT SINCE I
HAVE NOT BROKEN ANY PROMISES." HE ASKED RHETORICALLY
WHY SELF-DETERMINATION SHOULD BE IMPOSED ON THE SAHARA
WHEN IT WAS REFUSED FOR MAYOTTE. THE KING THEN SAID,
HOWEVER, THAT FOR "FORM'S SAKE" AND TO SHOW THAT HE IS
"RELAXED", HE IS PREPARED FOR ANOTHER SAHARA CONSULT-
ATION WHICH "ANYBODY" MIGHT OBSERVE, PROVIDED THERE IS
A CENSUS AND AN END TO ALL INCURSIONS INTO "MOROCCAN
AND MAURITANIAN TERRITORY." HE THEN STATED THAT HE HAD
ACCEPTED PRINCE FAHD'S DEMARCHES "ON THE IRREVERSIBLE

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CONDITION THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF DISCUSSING THE MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN CHARACTER OF THE SAHARA." THE KING'S SEEMINGLY CONTRADICTIONARY STATEMENTS MAY REFLECT SOME SLIGHT MOVEMENT TOWARDS ALGERIAN CONCERNS ABOUT SELF-DETERMINATION, ALTHOUGH HASSAN'S INSISTANCE ON THE MOROCCO-MAURITANIAN CHARACTER OF THE EX-SAHARA WOULD SEEM TO BELIE IT.

5. ANOTHER COMMENT OF THE KING WHICH ELICITED INTEREST WAS HIS REFERENCE TO A "RABAT-MADRID-PARIS AXIS." IN REPLY TO A NEWSMAN'S QUESTION ON THIS POINT, THE ELYSEE SPOKESMAN QUESTIONED THE TERM, BUT WENT ON TO NOTE THAT SINCE JUAN CARLOS' COMING TO POWER, FRANCO-SPANISH RELATIONS HAD TAKEN ON A "SPECIAL" CHARACTER, AND THAT AS SHOWN BY A RECENT POLL, FRANCO-MOROCCAN RELATIONS ARE "PRIVILEGED." THE KING'S SURPRISING SUGGESTION THAT SOCIALIST LEADER METTERRAND MEET WITH GISCARD WAS MET BY MOSTLY TONGUE-IN-CHEEK FRENCH PRESS COMMENTS SUGGESTING THAT THE KING WAS MEDDLING IN FRENCH INTERNAL AFFAIRS. HIS CRITICISM OF THE QUALITY OF THE FRENCH NOW BEING TAUGHT BY "COOPERANTS" IN MOROCCO PROVOKED WIDE COMMENT. THE QUAI INTERPRETS THIS SALLY AS A CLEVER SIGNAL TO THE ALGERIANS THAT IN THE MOROCCAN-FRENCH RELATIONSHIP, HASSAN FINDS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT TO COMPLAIN ABOUT.

6. ACCORDING TO QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR NORTH AFRICA TRISTAN D'ALBIS, NOTHING HAS YET TRICKLED DOWN ABOUT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN HASSAN AND GISCARD, AND PROBABLY NEVER WILL. HENCE EVEN THE QUAI IS IGNORANT OF THE REAL MEAT OF THE VISIT, ASSUMING THERE IS SOME. NONETHELESS, ALBIS DESCRIBED THE VISIT AS A GREAT SUCCESS FOR THE POLITICAL REASONS MENTIONED IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH. HE SAID THAT THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO CHIEFS OF STATE ARE GENUINELY WARM AND THAT THEY HOLD EACH OTHER IN HIGH ESTEEM. CONTRARY TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, ALBIS SAID THAT NO PROGRESS WAS MADE ON THE MOROCCAN REQUEST FOR A NUCLEAR REACTOR, THE FRENCH SIMPLY HAVING TAKEN NOTE AND PROMISED TO STUDY THE QUESTION. HE THOUGHT THAT HASSAN, WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION CONSIDERING THE
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BRILLIANCE OF HIS PERFORMANCE OVER THE LAST THREE OR FOUR YEARS, MERELY WANTED TO PUT HIMSELF IN THE PUBLIC EYE ON A LEVEL WITH THE SHAH IN NUCLEAR CONCERN, BUT THAT THE KING HAD NO INTENTION OF PUSHING SUCH A COSTLY

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USIA-06 TRSE-00 EB-07 ACDA-07 SAM-01 /092 W

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PROJECT.

7. NO NEW AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED DURING THE VISIT, BUT ALBIS SAID THAT BILATERAL CONVERSATIONS ON ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL MATTERS WENT OFF WELL. HE CLAIMED TO KNOW NOTHING ABOUT MILITARY DISCUSSIONS, BUT IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT BOTH THE KING AND HIS ADVISERS AT LEAST REQUESTED INCREASED FRENCH SUPPORT.

8. COMMENT: FROM THE FRENCH POINT OF VIEW, THE VISIT WAS INTENDED TO BOLSTER HASSAN'S POSITION AT HOME, TO SOLIDIFY CURRENTLY EXCELLENT FRANCO-MOROCCAN RELATIONS (GOOD RELATIONS WITH RABAT MAKE GOOD INTERNAL POLITICS IN FRANCE), AND TO DO THIS WITHOUT GREAT OFFENSE TO ALGERIA. THANKS PARTLY TO HASSAN'S DISCRETION ON THE SAHARA, THE VISIT APPEARS TO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THESE AIMS, AND THE FRENCH, THEREFORE,

SEE IT AS A GREAT SUCCESS.

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9. MOREOVER, THE FRENCH TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO EMPHASIZE THEIR INTEREST IN MEDITERRANEAN COOPERATION. WHILE THE QUAI NO LONGER CONSIDERS A MEDITERRANEAN PACT AS A SERIOUS POSSIBILITY GIVEN THE RIVALRIES BETWEEN ALGERIA AND MOROCCO, LIBYA AND EGYPT, ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBORS, GREECE AND TURKEY, ETC., IT CONTINUES TO HOPE THAT THE TIME WILL COME WHEN FRANCE CAN PLAY THE ROLE OF PRIMUS INTER PARES IN THE REGION. UNTIL THEN, FRANCE WANTS NO ONE TO FORGET THAT IT HAS INTERESTS IN ALL OF THE COUNTRIES BORDERING THE MEDITERRANEAN. THAT THESE INTERESTS ARE OFTEN CONFLICTING MAY THREATEN BUT WILL NOT DESTROY THE MEDITERRANEAN MYSTIQUE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, REPORTS, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PARIS35602
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760445-0807
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761283/aaaactus.tel
Line Count: 298
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 APR 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <16 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HASSAN'S VISIT TO FRANCE: NOV 22-25 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: KING HASSAN'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO FRANCE WAS THE OCCASION FOR HEAVY MEDIA TREATME
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, FR, MO, (HASSAN II)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006